# High-tech pool venue Poolhouse set to launch in London



The competitive leisure landscape in the UK is set to evolve further, with the announcement that the founders of Topgolf and Puttshack, twins Steve and Dave Jolliffe, have secured $34 million (£25 million) in funding to develop a high-tech version of pool. The venture, named Poolhouse, aims to merge traditional pool with innovative technology to attract a younger audience seeking more engaging social activities.

Planned to launch next year, the first Poolhouse venue will be located near Liverpool Street station in London. According to the Jolliffe twins, the establishment will encapsulate “the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas” while incorporating the “grit of iconic pool halls”. This conceptual blend is intended to enhance the experience of playing pool, making it not just a game but an event, thus appealing to groups of players rather than individuals.

The investment in Poolhouse is being backed by several notable entities, including the US-based venture capital firm Sharp Alpha Advisors and dmg ventures, the investment arm of the Daily Mail. The venue will adopt traditional pool equipment, including tables, balls, and cues, yet will differentiate itself by integrating tracking technology and video projections. These additions will introduce bonus targets and obstacles, aiming to create a more dynamic and engaging atmosphere for players.

In addition to opening their venues, the Jolliffe twins plan to sell this technologically-enhanced equipment to bars and pubs looking to modernise their existing pool offerings. Steve Jolliffe highlighted the potential impact of the project, stating, “Today, more people play at Topgolf than on traditional golf courses in the US, and we aim to make an even greater impact on the world of pool. While we have a strong track record, this project has been our most challenging endeavour yet.”

The rise of activity bars in the UK can be traced back to establishments like All Star Lanes, which debuted in London in 2006, followed by Bounce, a table tennis venue, six years later. The trend has gained momentum as people increasingly seek out social-media friendly venues that offer more than traditional drinking experiences. The type of activities has expanded significantly, with bowling, indoor crazy golf, escape rooms, and now pool, among others, taking centre stage.

This surge in competitive socialising options is largely attributed to changing consumer habits, particularly among the younger demographic. Market research from Mintel indicates that consumers aged 18 to 24 are now as likely to seek out competitive socialising activities as they are to visit traditional pubs. Paul Davies, director of consumer leisure habits at Mintel, noted the ongoing demand from younger consumers for “thrilling and novel experiences”.

However, with the rapid growth of the sector, Davies cautioned that the days of guaranteed success for new ventures may be diminishing. He advised that operators should be vigilant of oversupply, especially in urban centres where popular activities like crazy golf and ping pong risk becoming saturated.

The venture into high-tech pool entertainment, spearheaded by the Jolliffe twins, embodies a broader trend in the leisure industry where innovation and interactivity are becoming essential to attract customers. As the Poolhouse initiative unfolds, it remains to be seen how it will impact the current competitive leisure market and whether it can carve out a niche amid an expanding array of options for socialising in the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/poolhouse-from-the-founders-of-topgolf--secure-34m-in-funding-to-revolutionise-pool-302427566.html> - This article supports the claim that the founders of Topgolf have raised $34 million for Poolhouse, a tech-enabled pool concept. It also details the venture's plans to open a venue in London and expand globally.
2. <https://sifted.eu/articles/topgolf-puttshack-golf-startup-pool-poolhouse> - This article provides further information on the funding and plans for Poolhouse, highlighting its focus on competitive socialising and the integration of technology into the game of pool.
3. <https://www.fsrmagazine.com/feature/topgolf-founders-eye-pool-as-next-big-social-gaming-venture> - This article supports the details about Poolhouse's ambitions to revolutionize the game of pool with technology and its upcoming venue near Liverpool Street in London.
4. <https://restaurantbusinessonline.com/emerging-brands/topgolf-puttshack-founders-launch-new-concept-bringing-tech-game-pool> - This article emphasizes the role of Poolhouse in the broader 'eatertainment' industry and highlights its plan to target a high-end market with a unique pool experience.
5. <https://www.mintel.com/uk> - Mintel's research supports the trend of younger consumers seeking more engaging socialising experiences beyond traditional pubs, which aligns with Poolhouse's strategy of offering interactive leisure activities.
6. <https://www.savills.co.uk/news-and-research/news/2023/uk-competitive-socialising-market-continues-to-grow> - Savills reports on the growth of competitive socialising in the UK, which includes activities like indoor golf and now pool, reflecting the market's expansion and diversification.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiqgFBVV95cUxPUzhFQ2JYYWY1SWdaNjZtYTlLbnFNRmNPdUlxbEJoTGxMQzJ4eE1pRnNEY2tHUDJYV0pUNTRVTjgwWk81Umh1bW0tSGI4MVZSdFBkZFBmUS12QWdCRncyUWdwd1UzZzZsWmNWQTZ2TmNLR0ctMnVrYjVSZzlYck9jRzZrYllyb0dwZlJvc29UWjNRTVh0M2VMRWRscjdSdUlScmgwQTlHTE9yZw?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data